
*Speech delivered by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta,
on the occasion of the Global College Malta Graduation Ceremony*

10 November 2017

From the outset, let me commend the staff of Global College Malta, for their great efforts, to provide quality educational services to a growing number of students.

I am pleased to note that over the past years, Global College Malta has continuously raised the bar, for a higher standard of education and knowledge, which it offers to both its undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Dear students, this is a joyful day for you and your families, and I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations for your successes.

Graduation day is a special moment in your lives, which marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

You are at a moment in your lives when the skills and qualities which you have developed over the past years, in study, can now be put to good use.

I am convinced that your achievements will open up very interesting and exciting future opportunities, to be of service to the people and communities around you.

On this important day of your lives, I would like to share some thoughts with you, as I believe that each and every one of us, and in particular young people, must not only concentrate on their future opportunities, in isolation, but must also be connected to what is taking place around us.

I believe that you are now best placed to contribute to our communities, and our society.

One of the pressing issues of contemporary concern, which I would like to share with you today, so as to bring it to the fore of your minds, is the urgent reality of climate change.

We are facing unprecedented changes, which are taking place all around us, in our oceans and the land environments in which we live.

Unfortunately, many of these damaging processes, which are affecting our climate, are a direct result of human actions. At this point in time, in the history of humanity, we can only contain the damage that has been done and only help to ensure that it does not get worse.

We can do this by choosing to act in a more sustainable and responsible manner towards the earth, which is our home.

You might ask, why am I focusing on this topic, on your graduation day?

This is because I believe that it is essential for your generation to be vociferous activists for the much-needed positive and respectful change, in our mentalities and our culture, to create a more sustainable future for all.

This important issue is also at the heart of the United Nations' Agenda 2030, and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

Each one of these goals aims to create a world that will be able to sustain a healthy life and holistic wellbeing, for all the inhabitants of our world.

As new graduates, you will be in a position to influence various sectors, and it is in this context that I would like to appeal to you, to embrace the responsibilities, which have been laid down for us by Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals.

I would like to encourage you, to commit to incorporating these goals in your own lives, by acting in ways that promote respect for our natural heritage and the biodiversity it contains.

Your example is essential, to encourage others to follow suit.

The easiest way out, for all of us, is to think as individuals in isolation from the rest of society. Pursuing what is true and just is always a more difficult choice, however, we, as members of the human race, cannot afford to go on with "business as usual."

We know that doing so would continue to damage and endanger our planet, and subsequently, our lives.

Let me therefore urge you, once more, to be champions of responsible, sustainable, and renewable attitudes, within your places of work, your homes, and among your peers.

Let me encourage you to be active in your respective communities, to help empower and promote sustainable attitudes and mentalities.

I would like to conclude my remarks by encouraging you, as you go out into the world as new graduates, to always remember that the pursuit of truth is the key to all knowledge.

This key to knowledge is accessed, in the most powerful way, when we make the choice to act in a spirit of respect.

I hope that you shall, always and in all ways, make the active promotion of peace, wellbeing, and respect a cornerstone in your lives.

Let me once again congratulate you on your graduation, and offer you all my best wishes for the future.